

# Gems of Thought

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## GEMS OF THOUGHT.

There is in the heart of woman such a deep well of love that no age can freeze it.

What home in after-life is beloved like the walls that girt round the innocent days of our childhood?

When our desires are fulfilled to the very letter, we always find some mistake which renders them anything but what we expected.

Every year of my life I grow more and more convinced that it is wisest and best to fix our attention on the beautiful and the good, and dwell as little as possible on the evil and the false.

Nothing sets so wide a mark between a vulgar and a noble soul, as the respect and reverential love of woman kind. A man who is always sneering at woman is generally a coarse profligate or a coarser bigot.

Of all learning the most difficult department is to unlearn; drawing a mistake or prejudice out of the head is as painful as drawing a tooth, and the patient never thanks the operator.

As every reflux of the tide leaves behind it a few shells to mark its course, so it is fitting that every violent excitement of the speculative spirit should bequeath to posterity some memorial of the errors it has caused and the mischief it has done.

When an opinion is violently attacked, it raises an attention in the persecuted party, and gives an alarm to their vanity, by making them think that worth defending and keeping at the hazard of their lives, which perhaps otherwise they would only have admired awhile for the sake of novelty, and afterwards resigned of their own accord.

It is far from being true, in the progress of knowledge, that after every failure we must re-commence from the beginning. Every failure is a step to success; every detection of what is false directs us towards what is true: every trial exhausts some tempting form of error. Not only so; but scarcely any attempt is entirely a failure: scarcely any theory, the result of steady thought, is altogether false: no tempting form of error is without some latent charm derived from truth.

The person who has not been a grandmother, knows nothing of the anxieties of this life. It is bad enough to have a drunken husband, but when you come to compare that affliction with two generations of croup, hooping-cough, and measles, you elevate a sprained ankle to the dignity of a broken leg, and class toothaches with apple-plexy.

The fireside is a seminary of infinite importance; it is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and color to the whole texture of life.

We may glean knowledge by reading, but the chaff must be separated from the wheat by thinking. Knowledge is proud that he has earned so much—Wisdom is humble that she knows no more.

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The more we help others to bear their burdens, the lighter our own will be.

Surely some people must know themselves; they never think about anything else.

Nobody ever sees an action as very wrong when under the excitement of doing it.

Love is like honesty—much talked about, and but little understood.

Habit uniformly and constantly strengthens all our active exertions.

He who says there is no such thing as an honest man, you may be sure is himself a knave.

If you would not have affliction to visit you twice, listen at once to what it teaches.

Time past is contracted into a point, and that the infancy of being. Time to come is seen expanding into eternal existence.

Pain, poverty, or infamy, are the natural products of vicious and imprudent acts; as the contrary blessings are of good ones.

Medical writers all agree that gluttony conducts more people to the grave than drunkenness. The old adage is true, that "many people dig their graves with their teeth."

Sir Walter Scott and Daniel O'Connell, at a late period of their lives, ascribed their success in the world principally to their wives. Were the truth known, theirs is the history of thousands.

If you would relish your food, labor for it; if you would enjoy the raiment, pay for it before you wear it; if you would sleep soundly, take a clear conscience to bed with you.

Fine sensibilities are like woodbines, delightful luxuries of beauty to twine round a solid, upright stem of understanding; but very poor things if they are left to creep along the ground.

We see so darkly into futurity, we never know when we have real cause to rejoice or lament. The worst appearances have often happy consequences, as the best lead many times unto the greatest misfortunes.

There is a large and fertile space in every life, in which might be planted the oaks and fruit trees of enlightened principle and virtuous habit, which, growing up, would yield to old age an enjoyment, a glory and a shade.

With a double vigilance should we watch our actions, when we reflect that good and bad ones are never childless; and that, in both cases, the offspring goes beyond the parent—every good begetting a better, every bad a worse.

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power! They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.

What a serious matter our life is!—how unworthy and stupid it is to trifle it away without heed! What a wretched, insignificant, worthless creature any one comes to be who does not as soon as possible lend his whole strength, as in stringing a stiff bow, to doing whatever task lies first before him!

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Virtue is little wont to look back after her shadow, Reputation.

Do the *frowns* of Fate startle you? Fear her *smiles* yet more.

The test of an enjoyment is the remembrance which it leaves behind it.

The sun produces life, or causes death, according as its rays fall—and so doth love.

Forget not that human virtue is a polished steel, which is rusted by a breath.

The praises of others may be of use, in teaching us, not what we are, but what we ought to be.

Alas! the flame of friendship shines but in the nights of life; for the sun of prosperity overpowers its rays.

The mind is like a sheet of white paper in this. that the impressions it receives the oftener, and retains the longest, are black ones.

Most men work for the present, a few for the future. The wise work for both—for the future in the present, and for the present in the future.

The progress of knowledge is slow. Like the sun, we cannot see it moving: but after a while we perceive that it has moved, nay, that it has moved onward.

Nature has left every man a capacity of being agreeable, though not of shining in company; and there are a hundred men sufficiently qualified for both, who, by a very few faults, that they might correct in half an hour, are not so much as tolerable.

In a controversy, both parties will commonly go too far. Would you have your adversary give up his errors?—be beforehand with him, and give up yours. He will resist your arguments more sturdily than your example. Indeed, if he is generous, you may fear his over-running on the other side; for nothing provokes retaliation more than concession does.

The tasks set to children should be moderate. Over-exertion is hurtful, both physically and intellectually, and even morally. But it is of the utmost importance that they should be made to fulfil all their tasks correctly and punctually. This will train them for an exact, conscientious discharge of their duties in after life.

There is no occasion to trample upon the meanest reptile, nor to sneak to the greatest prince. Insolence and baseness are equally unmanly.

Lord Shaftsbury says that he would be virtuous for his own sake, though nobody were to know it; as he would be clean for his own sake, though nobody were to see him.

The longer we live, the more our experience widens; the less prone are we to judge our neighbor's conduct—to question the world's wisdom.

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There is one way of attaining what we may term, if not *utter*, at least mortal happiness. It is this—a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others. In that one maxim is concentrated whatever is noble in morality, sublime in religion, or unanswerable in truth. In that pursuit we have all scope for whatever is excellent in our hearts, and none for the petty passions which our nature is heir to. Thus engaged, whatever be our errors, there will be nobility, not weakness, in our remorse; whatever be our failure, virtue, not selfishness, in our regret; and in success, vanity itself will become holy, and triumph eternal.

A man's dealings must be honest and upright. Let his *yea* be *yea*, and his *nay* be *nay*. Let him be rigidly exact when he has to pay, and forbearing when he has to receive. He must not at all delay just payments; and if he has been obliged to sue another, and has obtained judgment in his favor, let him be merciful, patient, and forbearing.

Unnecessarily deliver not your opinion; but when you do, let it be just, well considered, and plain. Be charitable in all thought, word, and deed, and ever ready to forgive injuries done to yourself; and be more pleased to do good than to receive good.

Think nought a trifles, though it small appear: Sands make the mountain, moments make the year,  
And trifles life. Your care to trifles give,  
Else you may die ere you have learnt to live.

Ten friends are dearly purchased at the expense of a single enemy; for the latter will take ten times more pains to injure you than the former will take to do you a service.

A man improves more by reading the story of a person eminent for prudence and virtue, than by the finest rules and precepts of morality.

Never despise humble services; when large ships run aground, little boats may pull them off.

The poet is the pupil of truth; for the false can never be poetry.

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A wise man never grows old in spirit; he marches with the age.

Conclude, at least, nine parts in ten of what is handed about by common fame to be false.

A sense of honor is the only sure and broad foundation of a sense of religion.

Common honesty is the indispensable basis of charity; and common sense, the sure and needful resting-place for a soaring intelligence.

The character of the sincere Christian is imperfect until it finds embodiment in that of the true gentleman.